

Michel S. Beaulieu, David K. Ratz and Ronald N. Harpelle, eds., *Hard Work Conquers All: Building the Finnish Community in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018. 239 pages. ISBN: 978-0-774-83468-1.

While Finnish immigrants in Canada have had a rich history and have significantly influenced their new country, the Finnish Canadian diaspora still remains a regrettably understudied topic. This makes such rare studies as the recent *Hard Work Conquers All* more precious. In the nine articles that comprise this collection, the authors address Finnish experiences in Canada from a number of angles. They concentrate mostly on the early twentieth century, which was the heyday of the Finnish Canadian community and their institutions. The authors analyze such diverse subjects as the immigrants' political activism, their role in the Great War, the experiences of Finnish Canadian women, and the community's ethnic activities, which include letters to Finland, food, sport, newspaper publications, clubs and other landmarks in the Canadian natural, social and cultural landscape.

In the first article "The Finnish Contribution to Early Canadian Socialist Organizations," Michel S. Beaulieu chronicles the colorful history of Finnish Canadian political and labor activism between the 1900s and the 1930s. The author demonstrates how immigration from Finland with its strong traditions of leftism reinvigorated the socialist and trade union movement in Canada. Yet Beaulieu highlights that, like in the USA, the history of Finns in organizations that were often Anglo-dominated was complex. These groups in Canada were often plagued by political and ethnocultural differences, mutual misunderstanding, as well as locals' prejudices and numerous splits. J. Donald Wilson's "Matti Kurikka and the Utopian Socialist Settlement of Sointula, British Columbia" also approaches Finnish Canadian political activism but from a different angle. By analyzing the short-lived socialist utopian project and its founding father, the author draws attention to their lasting legacy and impact on the history of Canada and the Finnish Canadian community.

"Wrestling, Immigration, and Working-Class Culture: The Finns of the Thunder Bay District before 1939" by C. Nathan Hatton sheds light on the numerous roles of this sport in the life of the Finnish Canadian diaspora and within larger Canadian society. Finnish immigrants in North America used to be prominent practitioners of wrestling at both amateur and professional levels in the early twentieth century. However, in both the popular imagination and in serious research, Finnish sporting prowess is more readily

associated with the “Flying Finns” on the track or with winter sports, such as skiing, ski jumping and ice hockey. The author skillfully illustrates how wrestling reflected the history of the immigrants: prejudices and mistrust of Canadian society, ideological divisions, and political activism.

In one of the most interesting articles of the collection, “‘I Won’t Be a Slave!’: Finnish Domestic Workers in Canada, 1911-1930,” the distinguished Finnish Canadian scholar Varpu Lindström addresses the topic of female labor among Finnish immigrants, which is sadly too often overlooked in favor of Finnish male workers. Lindström analyzes both the positive and negative sides of the lives of Finnish Canadian domestic workers in the wider social context of the mainstream society and the Finnish Canadian ethnic community. Lindström focuses on the organizations and networks that assisted domestic servants. Hanna Snellman’s article “Cookbooks for Upstairs: Ethnicity, Class, and Gender in Perspective” also approaches the experiences of immigrant women. Snellman’s analysis of early Finnish American cookbooks demonstrates that they are an invaluable source of information about the food culture of the immigrants as well as gender roles and identities.

“‘Dear Jussi-setä’: Generation, Language, and Community in the Youth Page of *Vapaus*, 1945-60” by Tanya Tuohimaa approaches the rarely broached topic of the ethnic media that was intended for the younger generation of Finnish immigrants. While the majority of research on the newspapers and magazines of Finns in North America focuses primarily on the activities of the grown-ups, she draws attention to children and teenagers. In her analysis of the youth section entitled *Perheen Nuoremille* [For the Family’s Youngest] in the left-wing newspaper *Vapaus*, she demonstrates how the editors of the page sought to keep their readers’ Finnishness alive by encouraging them to submit letters to which they would reply. Although their efforts to preserve Finnish among the youngsters were less successful, this initiative succeeded in establishing a sense of (Finnish) community among their readers who were of different ages.

Samira Saramo’s innovative article “Terveisiä: A Century of Finnish Immigrant Letters from Canada” considers the importance of personal letters to Finland as a source of insight on Finnish Canadians’ daily experiences and identity formation. Her analysis of the sample of their correspondence not only reveals a set of topics common to any immigrants (work, death, language barriers, culture shock, nostalgia etc.), but also offers a glimpse into how Finnish immigrants in Canada viewed themselves and other communities, and were in turn viewed by others and by those who stayed in

Finland. Their letters to Finland allowed them to negotiate transnational identities by being both here and there, and by connecting Finnish Canada with Finland.

As the title presumes, this collection has a particular accent on work in all forms, from the labor movement to the landmarks and imprints that titular hard work and all related aspects leave on the biophysical, cultural, and social landscape. Although the predominant focus of the collection on the first decades of the twentieth century can be viewed as a shortcoming, *Hard Work Conquers All* is a step forward in research into the experiences of Finns in North America. It is highly recommended for any scholar interested in Canadian history and the history of Nordic immigration to the New World. I hope that it will pave the way for further studies on Finnish Canadians as this topic definitely needs more attention.

Roman Kushnir

University of Jyväskylä

Adam Hjorthén, *Cross-border Commemorations: Celebrating Swedish Settlement in America*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018. 296 pages. ISBN: 978-1-62534-385-7.

This solidly-researched study focuses on historical commemorations as important elements in the process of social memory. The author posits that public reenactments of European colonial landings on the east coast have become the basis of Americans' ideas about the nations' founding. While seeing those celebrations as having important roles in creating a historical consciousness, he argues that they represent multi-national events. Rather than depicting the colonial landings as representing just scenes of arrival they also should be recognized as scenes of departure. Thus, the historical commemorations at Plymouth Rock, Jamestown, or St. Augustine all point to the need to consider those landings as international rather than just American history. This is a call for scholars to employ a methodology that leads them away from nationally focused contexts. To do that author Hjorthén uses an approach he calls "entangled history" (5). It fuses trans-cultural and transnational events, and depicts historical commemorations as combining multinational elements in their operations.

The book's goal is to examine the commemorations of Swedish colonialists' 1638 landing and settlement at The Rocks in Wilmington, Delaware,